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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON ITS FOURTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Hanna Beate SCHÖPP-SCHILLING

Addendum

V. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Second, third and fourth periodic reports

Tunisia

1. The Committee considered the combined initial and second reports of Tunisia (CEDAW/C/TUN/1-2) at its 269th and 273rd meetings, on 23 and 26 January 1995 (see CEDAW/C/SR.269 and 273).

2. In introducing the report, the representative of Tunisia, emphasized the important changes that had occurred in 1987, which asserted women's fundamental rights and promoted their economic and social status. The first accomplishment after Tunisia's independence was the adoption of the Personal Status Code, which laid the foundations for a new organization of the family, based on legal equality of men and women. Tunisia had a long history of women's emancipation, which led in 1936 to the creation of its first women's organization. The Tunisian leaders adopted a dynamic interpretation of Islam, and since 1956, Tunisian legislation had gradually been establishing the conditions necessary for women's equal status in the political, economic and social life. This new vision of society had been widely disseminated and had gradually been adopted by women. Equality of opportunity was beginning to emerge and was given considerable impetus through new women's organizations.

3. The representative stressed that in a society such as that of her country, women's freedom and their rights as citizens remained vulnerable, and must be continually reinforced. Among the mechanisms created to achieve that end was the Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs, the Research, Documentation and Information Centre and the National Women and Development Commission. Women had been appointed to high-level political posts and a series of legislative reforms had been sought to remove any archaic elements remaining from the past. The new vision of the family had been built on the principle of partnership between the spouses. The most important amendments referred to the Personal Status Code, the Penal Code and the Labour Code, and thus women currently entered more fully into the era of human rights. The greater involvement of women in the informal sector had also been able to limit the negative effects of the structural adjustment plan.

4. The representative illustrated, through concrete figures, the advances made by women in many professions, in decision-making positions and in schooling, thanks to the policies of universal education, health and family planning. Since 1956, Tunisian legislation had been modelling a new society within the framework of modern Islam, gradually abandoning the static models of thought inherited from traditional society, and the Tunisian society of today was concerned with following the principles of religion without sacrificing progress. Major concerns were illiteracy and the resurgence of backward models under the influence of current fundamentalism. Tunisia was aware that it could not successfully embark upon the twenty-first century without allowing an irreversible involvement of women in its development policy.

General observations

5. The Committee commended the well-structured and comprehensive report, supplemented by extensive statistical data, and its frank and succinct presentation and expressed appreciation for the fact that the Minister for Women's and Family Affairs herself had introduced the report. Bearing in mind Tunisia's geo-political environment, it paid tribute to the big strides made by the country for the advancement and empowerment of women and stated that Tunisia could be considered, even since the 1950s, as a shining example for other countries, because of its progressive and programmative interpretation of Islam. The members emphasized the adoption of the Personal Status Code in 1956 and all the reforms it brought about. However, they expressed concern at the reservations entered concerning articles 9 and 16, and in particular, at the language of the general declaration and the declaration made with regard to article 15, which seemed to close the door on any future revisions of national legislation. They expressed the hope that the reservations and declarations would be withdrawn in the near future. In replying, the representative said that Tunisia had not entered any reservations regarding other international treaties dealing with the status of women. The Convention had been ratified in a particular socio-political context, which was marked by rising fundamentalism, conservative traditions and related issues. Although the political vision was enlightened and most of the provisions of the Convention were already being applied in the country, the specificities of internal law should not be denied. The general declaration, however, did in no way intend to detract from the Government's commitment to the Convention. It was only made to explain the reservations entered. Since ratification many legal reforms had been introduced

in favour of women, which showed that the country was slowly but surely moving towards gender equality, and the reservations would certainly be withdrawn before not too long.

6. While recognizing the efforts undertaken by the Government in the area of education, members were concerned at the high rate of illiteracy among girls between the ages of 14 and 24, at the low level of the participation of women in political decision-making despite substantive gains made in legal equality and at the current provisions regarding women's inheritance rights. They stated that Tunisia had not yet succeeded in filling the gap between the elite and the broader sectors of the society. While praising all the rights given to women, further information was requested on the de facto situation of women and on steps taken by the Government to protect the rights of individual women, irrespective of their family status. In reply, the representative stated that a general policy of emancipation and faith in the human being was the driving principle for all political action, and the measures taken by the President in 1992 marked a certain dynamism in the women's movement. The participation of women at the last elections had been four times higher than in the past and the President emphasized in his statements that women should take advantage of the opportunities provided to them by democracy to develop further their achievements. Women's rights were fundamental rights, which benefited women irrespective of their family status. At the same time, while the family needed to be preserved, decision-making in the family needed to be shared by women and men. A study had been made on the issue.

7. Referring to pressure exercised by religious extremist groups in neighbouring countries and to questions raised as to whether there was any long-term plan that would guarantee women their full democratic rights and avoid any set-backs and whether Tunisia was collaborating with other Islamic countries in that respect, the representative replied that, in Tunisia, democracy was a process based on the principle that its conditions were fulfilled and that human rights encompassed also economic and social rights. Political liberty was meaningless without economic independence. She said that the terrorists who denied women their rights were also inveterated enemies of human rights in general, and democracy must defend itself against those forces. Yet Tunisia could not remain isolated in following the right path and other countries should follow that example.

8. In making an additional comment, a member inquired whether Tunisia was intending to introduce women's issues into the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Article 3

9. Members inquired through which means the national mechanism for the advancement of women was implementing its policies at the regional level, what its financial resources were and which steps were being taken to involve more women in the mainstream of the society.

Article 5

10. Members praised efforts made to correct stereotypes through presenting a more positive image of women in school textbooks and through human rights education. Further information was requested on violence against women of any kind, i.e., domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment at the work place, violence against female prisoners, in particular political prisoners, violence against prostitutes and any other vulnerable groups, and sexual abuse practised by police officers.

11. The representative explained that the phenomenon of violence against women had only recently become a subject of investigation, and it was difficult to obtain reliable statistical data because the victims only rarely reported such incidents to the competent authorities. So far, only 7 per cent of cases of marital violence had been submitted to the Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs. The subject was no longer taboo and women's associations were carrying out studies and setting up hot-line services for battered women. The results of those efforts would be outlined in the subsequent report. It was equally difficult to obtain trustworthy statistical data on cases of rape and sexual harassment, and only rarely were cases reported. Apart from the important change in the Penal Code regarding conjugal violence, which made rape within marriage a punishable offence, other new measures to deal with the problem were the institution of a family judge, the creation of defence and social integration centres, hot-line services, centres for battered women set up by non-governmental organizations and media campaigns directed at young people. Violence against women was dealt with in the framework of a global national strategy of awareness-raising. In addition to that, the Research Documentation and Information Centre (CREDIF) had issued a little booklet to disseminate the contents of the Convention in the schools.

Article 6

12. Responding to questions regarding health care plans for prostitutes, the representative emphasized that the authorities focused on the health aspect and instituted mandatory medical visits for prostitutes in order to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

13. In reply to questions, the representative explained that regulated prostitution was not banned because it curtailed clandestine prostitution and protected minors from abuses. Clandestine prostitution was severely punished in Tunisia. Replying to a question about the percentage of regulated prostitution, the representative said that it had drastically decreased. Currently only 68 women were registered in Tunis as "regulated prostitutes". The decrease was attributable to the rising living standard, the progressive eradication of poverty and women's entry into the labour force.

14. Replying to questions raised by members about the existence of child prostitution and trafficking in women, the representative stated that neither of the two had ever existed in Tunisia despite rising tourism. Asked about measures to prevent minors from engaging in prostitution the representative said

that it was banned by law. Judges could decide to place delinquent minors in special centres in order to prepare them for their reintegration into society.

15. Further questions referred to the social reintegration of prostitutes, and to the protection of the rights of female prostitutes in practice. Members requested detailed statistical data in the subsequent report and asked whether the current legislation was not discriminatory in that it made a distinction between female prostitutes and their male clients.

Article 7

16. Asked about measures taken to change women's approach to political life and to encourage girls to alter their views on political matters, the representative stated that the Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs had set up an evaluation campaign to assess the impact of development projects on women. The Ministry was also planning to set up several plans of action, such as one aimed at rural women and another that focused on better time sharing by women between professional and household tasks, and was conducting several communication and information campaigns. The Ministry was assisted in its efforts by the National Council for Women and the Family and non-governmental organizations.

17. Members wanted to know how the Government was coping with the apparent resistance by men to institutionalizing women's integration in political life. The representative said that although some men had shown resistance, it was gradually waning because of women's outstanding competence and devotion, and at the last elections a woman had scored highest in the main party. More and more women had become visible at lower political levels and sensitization campaigns should help women in gaining more votes.

18. As members noted that women did not seem to be represented in trade unions nor in banking institutions, the representative said that presently a national women's commission consisting of coopted members participated actively in the elaboration of an activity programme for trade unions.

Article 9

19. When asked why women were given unequal treatment where the transmission of nationality to alien spouses and to their children was concerned and whether the National Women and Development Commission was taking any steps to remove these differentials, the representative said that the inequality had been softened as a result of the amendment of article 12 of the Nationality Code in July 1993. Currently the transfer of nationality still required the consent of both spouses. It was to be hoped that the reservation in this article could be lifted in the near future.

20. Members also inquired what was being done to disseminate information on the legal rights of women to the public at large.

Article 10

21. Members commended the Government for the particular attention to education and for dedicating to it as much as 10 per cent of the State budget. They

praised the strides made in increasing the enrolment level of girls in secondary schools. They noted, however, a high concentration of girls in traditional female fields of education and a tendency of female students to embark on careers that were financially less rewarding. They asked whether there was a particular preference for girls to follow the traditional female paths and whether there were any plans to encourage them to break into non-traditional, so-called "men's fields". Asked whether school curricula might be responsible for that fact, the representative stated that schoolbooks did not allow for any discrimination. However, girls appeared to choose economics more frequently than industrial vocations, and arts and literature over mathematics and science. Girls' options were also determined by the current labour market, which was still dominated by certain stereotypes. The educational reform introduced new school orientations. Another innovation was the introduction of human rights education at primary and secondary level. Other measures in that direction were national seminars and annual campaigns, orientation courses for parents and their children and pilot projects to encourage girls to take technical subjects.

22. In reaction to the statement by the representative that, for the first time, a woman had become regional director of secondary education and a woman had been appointed as university rector, members warned against the "token woman" syndrome. They said that experience in other countries had shown that the appointment of a "token woman" reinforced stereotypes, rather than improved the status of women.

23. Commenting on the lower school enrolment of girls and replying to questions as to whether any studies had been carried out to determine the causes for the high drop-out rate of girls from school, the representative explained through statistical data that the gap between girls and boys in school enrolment was gradually shrinking in the direction of attaining a gender balance. Whereas originally the school drop-out rate was higher for girls than for boys, especially in rural areas, that tendency had been almost reversed at all levels. Studies that had been undertaken on the subject gave as major reasons socio-economic and cultural factors in the rural areas. To alleviate that problem, school timetables had been changed, school aids had been introduced, schooling had been made mandatory from 6 to 16 years and non-compliance had been put under sanction. It was said that the need to promote equality of opportunities for children of both sexes in urban and rural areas had become one of the parameters for educational planning and infrastructure.

24. Referring to observations made about the high illiteracy rate, the representative said that one of the reasons for the high percentage of illiterate girls was that girls entered school later than boys. It was to be hoped that the school reform and the national programme that had been elaborated within the eighth development plan would achieve the targets set for reducing female illiteracy, particularly in the 18 to 29 age group. A national commission had been set up in collaboration with several ministries to monitor the programme.

Article 11

25. Comments were made about the low percentage of women's economic participation in the agricultural sector, and members asked whether efforts were

being made to give more importance to the informal sector. The representative stated that numerous studies showed the extent to which informal sector had contributed to the national economy, and it was also proved that women's contribution to the informal sector could reduce the negative effects of the structural adjustment plan. Forthcoming measures for that sector were an assistance fund for small rural enterprises, a sensitization campaign about family economy and the publication of a guidebook to instruct women about possibilities of credit.

26. Asked about any plans to explore the training possibilities for women in non-traditional jobs, the representative said that thanks to the current reform of professional training, women should get access to new vocational and professional qualifications, in particular in non-traditional fields. At the same time, the quality of training was improved in women's traditional fields.

27. Members inquired about plans to abolish the prohibition on night work for women.

Article 12

28. While commending the Government's efforts made in the area of family planning, members asked whether plans existed to expand the health coverage for women and girls. The representative confirmed the existence of such plans and programmes.

29. Asked whether a woman could decide to have an abortion or whether she needed the permission of her husband, the representative said that abortion was allowed under certain conditions and if it was carried out in a hospital by an authorized physician within the first three months of pregnancy. After that time abortion was allowed only for health reasons.

30. Further clarification was requested on women who allegedly suffered depression or hysteria as they sought to reconcile liberal education with traditional norms. The representative commented that those allegations were not supported by any reliable data and seemed to be part of the propaganda of fundamentalists.

Article 15

31. Members asked why the Government had entered a declaration on this article upon ratification of the Convention in so far as choice of residence and domicile by women was concerned, despite the entry into force of the Personal Status Code. The representative explained that the declaration had been made because articles 23 and 61 of the old Personal Status Code contradicted the provisions of the Convention. Since the amendment of the Code, the clause of "obedience" had been removed. Currently, the free choice of the woman's residence could only be curtailed in the light of her custody duties for a child of school age. Judges always took into consideration the child's interests as paramount.

Article 16

32. Members commended the Government on the progress made in the abolition of polygamy and the free choice of a husband, but they required more information and a real analysis of the de facto position of women in the family. Members were interested in knowing whether the national law of the country was the religious law as interpreted from the Koran, whether there was a separate secular law and what happened in cases of conflict. The representative explained that originally there had been no unified legal system. When Tunisia gained independence in 1956, the Sharia law and institutions had been reformed and one unified law applied to all Tunisians of any faith. Religious courts had been abolished, and the new Family Code of 1956 was applicable throughout. The amendment of the Personal Status Code gave women a better status in the family. The new family was founded on the concept of mutual respect and cooperation between the spouses in all family matters, including the education of their children, the obligation of women to contribute to family expenses and the abolition of the "obedience" clause. The legislation still preserved the husband as head of the family, but it was likely that as women gradually became more independent economically, the role of the husband as economic custodian would disappear. Another new provision was that women could get guardianship of their children after divorce.

33. In reply to a request for further explanation of the prohibition of polygamy, the representative said that one of the conditions for entering into a marriage was that the individual was free from any other marriage bond. Whoever infringed upon that provision was liable to sanction. Marriages had to be entered into the civil registry and customary law marriages and free unions were prohibited. The rights of children from free unions were protected through a system of judicial machinery.

34. Asked why the minimum age for marriage was different for girls and boys, the representative said that before the entry into force of the Family Code there was no minimum age at all. The current minimum ages were conditioned on mentality, traditions, education and access to the labour market.

35. In relation to questions raised about whether property acquired during marriage was equally shared between the spouses the representative explained that Tunisian law enshrined the separation of conjugal property. Each of the spouses maintained exclusive control over his or her property and was in charge of his or her debts. The spouses could, however, choose another system when they entered into marriage. While maintaining separation of the property that was brought into the marriage, the spouses could opt for community of property acquired during marriage. As that system was not generally known, it was rarely applied.

36. Members asked whether girls had the same rights to inherit as boys and whether the wife's right of inheritance from her deceased husband was equal to the husband's rights vis-à-vis his wife. The representative explained that the inheritance law was based on the Koran. Consequently, men inherited twice the share of women if they were equally related. It was to be hoped that with the evolution of the Tunisian society that inequality would be overcome.

37. Referring to the persistence of the institution of dowry the representative stated that it was maintained symbolically, in order not to break completely with the Muslim tradition. The amended Family Code, however, no longer contained a fixed amount.

38. Regarding questions about the possibility of inter-faith marriages, the representative said that a marriage of a Tunisian woman with a non-Muslim was possible only if the husband converted to Islam.

39. Asked about reservations entered by Tunisia upon ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child the representative said those reservations were similar to those with respect to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

40. Members asked what the reasons were for the reservation to article 16, paragraph 1 (c), whether it was socially accepted for a woman to live independently without a spouse, and who had the guardianship over children living outside the country, who were born in Tunisia to a foreign woman. They expressed concern at the non-recognition of free unions and inquired whether the Government was intending to ratify the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

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Rapporteur: Ms. Hanna Beate SCHÖPP-SCHILLING

V. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Addendum

Uganda

1. The Committee considered the initial and second periodic reports of Uganda (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2 and Add.1) at its 270th and 273rd meetings, on 23 and 26 January (see CEDAW/C/SR.270 and 273).

2. In introducing the report, the representative of the State party pointed out that women accounted for up to 80 per cent of food production in the agricultural sector and that they were widely employed in the informal sector in urban areas. She stressed that Uganda was one of the few sub-Saharan countries that was self-sufficient in agricultural production.

3. She also emphasized that the main objective of the Government was to ensure the positive integration of women and gender issues into the mainstream of all development processes from the planning through implementation to evaluation stages. She informed the Committee that the Government had addressed the integration strategy at national and sectoral levels.

4. Furthermore, the representative mentioned that the Government was committed to enhancing the participation of women in politics and decision-making at national and local levels through legislative and administrative measures.

5. She informed the Committee that major steps had been taken towards the full observance of the legal rights of women and on de facto discrimination against women in the areas of the family, education, employment, health care and nutrition policies and natural resources management. However, she pointed out that a lot remained to be done on both the de jure and de facto levels and that obstacles such as traditional customs and attitudes, the economic restructuring process and health and ecological crises impeded the efforts.

General observations

6. Members of the Committee commended the frankness and objectivity of the report and commented that the report followed the general guidelines. They welcomed the fact that the Convention had been ratified without reservations. They praised the Government of Uganda for involving non-governmental organizations in the preparation and evaluation of the report in a very innovative way. They suggested that a similar cooperation should be followed regarding the constitutional and other legal reforms.

7. Members commended the Government and, in particular, the President, for having appointed women to high positions in the Government, namely, the woman Vice-President and the five women ministers in the cabinet. Members advised Uganda to take advantage of the political will, including from the President, at those levels to make further necessary reforms. They welcomed the establishment of a Ministry of Gender and Community Development.

8. Other members noted that there were still various obstacles to the implementation of the Convention, such as religious and cultural practices, which had not yet been adequately addressed. It was also mentioned that traditions and customs were very deeply rooted and very diversified.

9. Members of the Committee noted with concern the effects of structural adjustment programmes on women and children. The Committee wanted to know what measures had been taken to deal with the negative effects of those programmes. The representative explained that various studies have been carried out on the effects of structural adjustment programmes on women in Uganda. Information on the findings of those studies would be included in the next report.

Questions relating to specific articles

Article 2

10. Some members of the Committee wanted to know what measures had been taken to amend the Constitution towards granting women equal rights in accordance with the Convention. One member indicated that the Constitution was silent on the issue of gender. She therefore suggested that the Government should take the matter into consideration when revising the Constitution. Others expressed their concern that the Constitution had failed to provide an accurate definition of sex discrimination. One expert referred to paragraph 64 of the report of the State party and asked if initiatives had been taken by women's organizations to make the Government reform the laws.

11. The representative replied that, as mentioned in the addendum to the report of the State party, the issue of equality was being addressed by the draft Constitution. He referred to clause 50 (2) and (3) of the draft Constitution. He also pointed out that the Government has been committed to the elimination of institutionalized discrimination against women. He referred to clause 50 (4) of the draft Constitution.

12. Members of the Committee noted that the Constitution referred to "he" throughout, while referring to both women and men, and suggested that the matter should be corrected. The representative answered that the draft Constitution would specify both men and women, particularly regarding critical issues on equality before the law, fundamental human rights and other constitutional rights.

13. The report of the State party indicated that the Government had introduced the death penalty for men convicted of rape and defilement. However, because men dominate the police force and crime detection, it was difficult to prove rape in court. The Members therefore inquired what steps were taken to convict men who were guilty of crimes such as rape and defilement. Also, more information was requested on the steps that have been taken to improve law enforcement procedures in the context of rape. The representative stated that the Government had taken measures to address the difficulty of prosecuting rape offenders. In that context, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development had been carrying out a study on the non-prosecution of rape cases. Findings had indicated that there were social, economic, legal and cultural factors contributing to the non-prosecution of rape offenders. The findings had been forwarded to the institutions concerned to call for their action to remedy these problems. This Ministry was also engaged in sensitization programmes, especially for the police and other law enforcement officers, concerning the problem of rape. Also, the Government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, both local and international, had been undertaking interventions during the training of police officers to specifically sensitize them on issues affecting women in criminal matters.

14. The Law Reform Commission was presently looking into the controversy surrounding the issue of the death penalty for rape offenders. Results would be included in the next report.

Article 3

15. One member wanted to know how many women were in the Law Reform Commission. The representative replied that figures were given in the addendum to the report: the Law Reform Commission should consist of six members, including at least one woman. However, the Commission currently had three Commissioners, one of whom was a woman. The Secretary of the Commission was also a woman.

16. One member wanted to know whether women's non-governmental organizations were involved in the constitution drafting process. The representative responded that the initial and second reports stated that individuals, as well as organizations representing various interest groups, had been involved in submitting memoranda of their views to the Constitutional Commission. Women's non-governmental organizations had also been involved in that process.

17. In that context, some members wanted to know how many complaints on discrimination against women had been received by interest groups and how many had been judicially disposed of. The representative replied that many complaints on discrimination against women were received; however, owing to the lack of gender-disaggregated data in that office, it was difficult to procure information on the exact number.

18. Another member asked if the Government had a plan to introduce an equal opportunities bill. Furthermore, she wanted to know whether the Government had addressed the issue of violence against women. The representative explained that the Constituent Assembly had considered the question of establishing an equal opportunities commission. He added that the process of drafting the Constitution has been ongoing since 1988 and now had six months to reach a conclusion.

19. In 1970, the Law Development Centre was established for the purpose of extending legal aid for women. The members wanted to know why this scheme had never taken off. In the report, it was noted that the Uganda Women's Lawyers Association could not serve all women in need of legal aid in the country. Members asked whether the Government had established additional legal aid agencies. The representative of Uganda referred to the information contained in the addendum to the report and explained that, in addition to the Uganda Women's Lawyers Association, the Uganda Law Society had been operating a similar project in the four regions of the country. Furthermore, the legal department of the Ministry of Gender and Community Development offered similar services.

20. Some members emphasized that the inferior status of women in the family impeded legal equality of women; they stressed that there was a need to adopt a new family code integrating statutory legislation and customary law. The representative replied that among the strategies to address the inferior status of women in Ugandan society, the Government had embarked on a process of reforming the laws on domestic relations. A draft bill on such a law had been put in place, which sought to integrate both the various customary laws and statutory law into one code. Further consultations and research were still being carried out, especially to ensure that the law was in line with international and regional human rights instruments on the status of women. Moreover, he stated that, as reported in the addendum to the report, the issue of domestic violence would be specifically addressed in the new law on domestic relations. Apart from legal measures, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development had been conducting legal education and sensitization activities on the problem in various parts of the country, together with locally based non-governmental organizations.

Article 4

21. Paragraph 79 of the report referred to Uganda's efforts to increase the level of participation of women in the public sector, based on affirmative action. One member wanted to know what action had been taken concerning the problem of wife beating.

Article 6

22. The report indicated that prostitution was a crime but did not state whether the clients of prostitutes were also considered guilty of a crime and whether they were prosecuted; nor did the report indicate whether measures to prevent acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were applied equally to prostitutes and clients. The representative replied that based on the definition of prostitution and prostitutes, the amended legislation S.134A of the Penal Code allowed for the prosecution of both parties involved in the act.

23. A clarification of paragraph 100 of the report, which referred to the extension of the age category of protected males and females from 14 to 18 years, was required. The representative reported that the age limit for statutory rape had been raised from 14 to 18 years.

24. Members requested more information concerning the trafficking in women in Uganda; what effective measures had been taken to decrease trafficking in women and their exploitation through prostitution? The representative replied that prostitution and trafficking in women in Uganda was highly commercially organized. In that regard, the legal position remained that trafficking in women was a crime under the laws of Uganda and all measures to address the crime would be employed in the event that anybody was arrested.

25. Paragraph 95 of the report noted the need to form policy and special programmes to prevent the spread of AIDS among women prostitutes. Some members wanted to know if such policies or programmes had been initiated. If not, what plans would be initiated in the future? In addressing the AIDS crisis, another member asked about proposals to eliminate polygamous marriages in order to stem the spread of the disease. It was asked how these marriages were viewed by the Ugandan Government.

26. The representative welcomed the recommendations of members for programmes to decrease the prevalence of prostitution. Such programmes should be implemented, especially in view of the danger of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDS. Information on future initiatives would be included in the next report.

Article 9

27. Unlike male citizens in Uganda, women do not enjoy the right to extend their citizenship to their children born outside the country. Similarly, women do not enjoy the right to extend their citizenship to foreign spouses. Furthermore, a married woman citizen is not entitled to have a passport issued without the consent of her husband. Members asked what measures had been taken to correct these inequalities. The representative replied that the existing legal bias preventing Ugandan women married to foreigners from extending their citizenship to spouses and children had been addressed in the draft Constitution. As indicated in the addendum to the report, clause 43 (2) (a) of the draft Constitution stated that every person married to a Ugandan citizen may apply to be registered as a citizen upon providing proof of a legal and subsisting marriage of at least three-years standing. The draft Constitution further stated that men and women should have equal rights at marriage, during

marriage and at its dissolution. Such a provision within the Constitution would address the current problems for Ugandan married women regarding passport and travel documents.

28. One member wanted to know whether a husband or father could prevent a wife or child from leaving the country. It was indicated that a girl child born out of wedlock was discriminated against. One expert asked whether these issues were being addressed by the Government. The representative replied that regarding discrimination of the girl child born out of wedlock, the legal position was that all children whether born in or out of wedlock were entitled to inherit equally from their parents.

Article 10

29. Paragraph 158 of the report referred to pre-primary school as a "private business". Members wanted to know whether the Government would revise its attitude towards pre-school education. The State party replied that the competition for entry into good primary schools had mainly occurred in urban areas and that the majority of the residents could afford the cost. However, the Government of Uganda had taken note of the concern of the members about the danger of abuse in the provision of education by private institutions. More detailed information would be provided in the next report.

30. In Uganda, 49 per cent of households are headed by a single young woman. The Committee wanted to have more information about the age of these young women and asked what measures had been taken by the Government to prevent early pregnancy, which disrupts education.

31. According to the report, 81.4 per cent of girls who should be in primary school enter into matrimonial relationships. Members inquired whether there was a special curriculum made available to these girls in order to make up for the lost primary education, and if not, how was the Government going to deal with that issue in the future. Several members expressed concern regarding the high number of pregnancies among young girls that had been caused by teachers. That could account for the high drop-out rate of girls who had suffered such violence. Members asked what measures had been taken to address the problem. Had information been provided to young girls about the dangers related to early sexual intercourse?

32. The representative responded that, as stated in the addendum to the report, the Ministry of Education was incorporating family life education, which included sex education, in the school curriculum. The Government as well as non-governmental organizations had been carrying out adult education and functional literacy programmes to target women and men who had not had an opportunity for formal education. Statistics indicated that the majority of persons attending those programmes were women. Specific statistics would be included in the next report.

33. Additional information was requested by members on primary education; was primary education compulsory and were there any age limits? The representative stated that the minimum age for entry into primary school for children in Uganda was six years old. He referred to the addendum to the report, which stated that

government policy was aimed at providing compulsory universal primary education by the year 2003. As to the financial resources, the representative replied that the process of providing government aid would be a gradual one; by gradually transforming the current educational system, primary education would become government aided, and university and other forms of tertiary education would be on a cost-sharing basis.

Article 12

34. Abortion was carried out in Uganda even though it was illegal. Members requested additional data on abortion. The representative answered that statistics on women dying from abortion had been difficult to obtain because the records from various hospitals were not compiled at one focal point. However, statistics from the main national hospitals indicated that in 1992 induced abortion accounted for one third of maternal deaths. While it had been possible to provide statistics on the ratio of HIV/AIDS infection between men and women, actual figures of people dying of AIDS had been difficult to get since the medical reports indicated the immediate causes of death, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, etc., rather than AIDS. Furthermore, many deaths had not been reported by hospitals because they happened at home, especially in rural areas.

35. Members also wanted to know if a woman who was infected with AIDS could have a legal abortion. The representative explained that the legal position on abortion was that if two medical doctors independently agreed that it was necessary for the woman's health, then an abortion could be performed.

36. In reference to paragraphs 251 and 252 of the report, the Committee wanted to know how successful government programmes had been in combating the spread of AIDS. Also, in reference to paragraph 259, the members wanted to be provided with a statistical update on AIDS. The representative replied that updated statistics on the prevalence of AIDS in Uganda were included in the addendum. Whereas the government programmes to combat the spread of AIDS now reached 90 per cent of the population, a corresponding change in sexual behaviour had not been achieved because that took some time. Government programmes to combat the spread of AIDS had to target all members of society, and should include information on the use of condoms. To provide for the latter, however, was a matter of financial resources.

37. Members requested specific statistics regarding the incidence of rape and incest, particularly of young girls. The representative explained that that information was difficult to obtain since there was no coherent pattern in police records.

38. As to the difference in the number of births per woman as stated in the written and oral reports, the representative stated that the recent increase of fertility rates could be explained by AIDS and high infant mortality rates.

39. The Members raised concerns about female circumcision in Uganda. They wanted to know why immediate action had not been taken to abolish that tradition, which was still practised in some parts of the country. Furthermore, what penalty was given to the person performing the female circumcision? Had there been any programmes to re-educate or inform those persons about the

dangers of circumcision? The Committee also requested more information on traditions and customs in Uganda. For example, were there any food taboos?

40. The representative replied that concerning health-related customs and taboos, the situation was that there were several tribes in Uganda with different customs and practices affecting women. Government policy had been to discourage customs and practices with a negative impact and promote the positive ones. The draft Constitution provided that any custom that was contrary to the fundamental human rights provided in the Constitution should be declared null and void. It was hoped that that provision would provide an effective challenge to the practice of female circumcision. Furthermore, the Inter-Committee for Africa, a regional organization that was addressing negative customary practices in Africa, had been operating programmes in Uganda. The Government of Uganda had also been carrying out sensitization programmes on female circumcision and other negative customary practices.

41. A member commented that the Government described prostitutes as a danger to society because of HIV/AIDS. Table 22 of the report indicated that only 2 per cent of the population had been using condoms. Had anything been done to inhibit the spread of AIDS among prostitutes by distributing condoms to them? Were there any programmes to inform the population about the use of condoms? The representative replied that there had been various general programmes for AIDS in Uganda. That information had already been included in the reports.

42. Table 19 in the report stated that there was a shortage of health personnel. Members believed that traditional healers and traditional medicine were the key to making assisted child bearing a financial possibility. Had Uganda made an effort to systematize its network of traditional birth attendants and traditional healers? Were development strategies making use of traditional knowledge, as opposed to imposing foreign approaches? What kind of family-planning facilities were available to women in rural areas? In response, the representative referred to the addendum to the report.

43. Members suggested that women in high political positions should become involved in information campaigns about the use of condoms, the spread of AIDS, etc.

Article 14

44. As to what measures had been taken to decrease illiteracy, provide health services and social protection to rural women and provide them with access to family planning, the representative referred to the addendum to the report.

Article 16

45. Some traditional practices such as polygamous marriages, as well as incest and rape, had furthered the spread of AIDS. Members inquired what programmes had been offered by the Government to women and men in order to prevent the transmission of AIDS? The representative replied that the issue of polygamy was considered in the new law on domestic relations.

46. Regarding interference and harassment by fathers, brothers or other relatives against widowed women when they had acquired property from deceased husbands, members wanted to know what measures had been taken by the Government to protect such women, legally as well as physically.

47. Concerning the issue of double standards in adultery and divorce, the representative replied that the provision in the draft Constitution on the equality of men and women in marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution was addressing the issue. Currently, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development was conducting a research project on women and inheritance in order to make recommendations to amend the current law in order to empower women in inheritance and succession matters. Existing legal provisions to protect women in succession matters were contained in the Administrator Generals Act, the Succession Act and criminal law. The Government had been sensitizing women through legal education on the existence of those provisions and institutions.

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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS FOURTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Hanna Beate SCHÖPP-SCHILLING

V. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Addendum

Russian Federation

1. The Committee considered the third and fourth periodic reports of the Russian Federation (CEDAW/C/USR/3 and 4) at its 274th meeting, on 26 January 1995.

2. Introducing the fourth periodic report, the representative of the State Party outlined the current economic, political and social situation in the Russian Federation and stressed that the position of women should be viewed within the context of the problems generally encountered in those areas. She stressed the depth and permanent nature of the current reforms in the Russian Federation and their international implications. She also pointed to the high economic and social costs of restructuring and to a whole new set of issues that the Russian Federation has had to deal with in the context of that process. Among the most acute issues were the continuing economic deterioration, the decline in real incomes, the spread of poverty, unemployment, massive migration and a sharp worsening of living standards for what appeared to be the majority of the population. Those problems were further complicated by serious ecological problems and the deterioration of the physical and social infrastructure caused by the sharp decline in capital investment.

3. Poverty had become a widespread and self-perpetuating condition for many strata of the population. There was a real danger of inter-generational transfer of poverty, since many children in poor families, particularly in single-parent households, were faced with a limited opportunity to develop as they lacked books, toys and other aids to intellectual and spiritual growth. Poverty in Russia was becoming increasingly feminized and women comprised 70 per cent of the country's unemployed. The high rate of unemployment among Russian women was primarily due to the rapid restructuring and privatization of industries employing a large proportion of female labour. The majority of unemployed women were highly educated, but the duration of their unemployment was twice as long as that of men. Social tensions, intensified by reform, had led to a resurgence of stereotyping of the role of women and to calls for their return to their "natural functions". Although national machinery for the advancement of women had been established and its functioning had protected women from some of the adverse consequences of reform, it had not as yet been able fully to articulate women's interests so as to affect the course of reform. Women remained debarred from economic and political decision-making.

4. The representative informed the members of the Committee that the Government of the Russian Federation, having realized that the monetarist underpinning of the first wave of economic reform provided only a limited set of social protection measures, had emphasized the provision of a proper level of social protection as the main requirement for the continuation of economic reform. She assured members of the Committee that, in spite of the current economic and political crisis in the Russian Federation and the sharp reduction in the capacity of the State to achieve the goals set by the Convention, the Government remained dedicated to the goals of women's advancement and the elimination of discrimination against them and would continue to take measures directed at alleviating the negative impact of transformation on women and improving their economic and social position.

General observations

5. Members thanked the Government for its report and noted its comprehensive and frank nature. They noted, however, that the fourth periodic report had a number of major weaknesses, among which the following should be mentioned. Firstly, there were few references to specific policies, programmes and activities being undertaken by the Government in connection with the provisions of the Convention. In addition, the limited number of statistics provided did not make it possible to grasp the real dimensions of the situation. Thus, the report was largely theoretical and, to some extent, incomplete in nature. It was rather difficult to assess how the status of women had evolved and what initiatives had been undertaken by the Government since the restructuring of the country had begun.

6. Members expressed concern that the special temporary measures adopted did not cover issues like increasing women's influence in policy or the market economy, their possibilities in higher positions, pay differences and other forms of discrimination in working life and the health situation of women. It seemed to be a fact that poverty in the Russian Federation was a female phenomenon.

7. Members noted with concern that with the end of communism and the introduction of the new system, changes had taken place in the political and economic spheres. While the restructuring process had entailed a series of progressive developments in society as a whole, women were encountering greater disadvantages as a result of the increase in their workload, inadequate child-care services and shrinking job opportunities; social changes were leading to a stratification that went beyond the social plane and was also directly apparent between the sexes. Yet the report said little about the economic crisis and the impact of stabilization and adjustment policies on women. A more detailed explanation should have been given of the way in which the burden of inflation had fallen on women's shoulders and increased their workload, given that the adjustment programmes had caused prices to rise and wages to be frozen, presumably forcing women to forgo certain common services that were formerly available to them.

Questions relating to specific articles

Article 3

8. Responding to a question on national machinery for the coordination of policies dealing with women and on its responsibilities, status and authority, the representative, referring to the fourth periodic report, informed members of the Committee that such machinery, with mandates for women, the family and children, had been established within federal, regional and local governments and that it cooperated with public organizations. A Commission for Women, the Family and Demography had been established in the office of the President of the Russian Federation. The Commission was a collective advisory body for the formulation and coordination of government policy for achieving equal rights and opportunities for men and women. A Committee on Women, the Family and Youth had been established in the State Duma. A Department for Women, the Family and Children's Questions existed within the Ministry of Social Defence. It coordinated State policy on the family, the social equality of women and child development. The Department worked in cooperation with the federal executive and legislative branches of the State. A National Preparatory Council for the Fourth World Conference on Women had been established. It consolidated the efforts of the State and of non-governmental organizations to improve the situation of women and to develop the State's social policy and its legal base.

9. Concerning a question raised on State programmes for the advancement of women, the representative replied that the aim of those programmes was to create conditions for the realization of the principles of equality between men and women in terms of their access to legal rights and freedoms. Such programmes included the provision of support to women candidates for election, the nomination of women as candidates for posts at various levels of the executive and legislative branches, a system of control of the implementation of decisions, and cooperation with the Government and with trade unions and non-governmental organizations. One of the main goals of those programmes was to help women with their family obligations and to achieve an equal distribution of family responsibilities between men and women.

10. Replying to a question on the role of women in economic and social decision-making and the integration of their concerns into economic and social

planning, the representative, referring to the fourth periodic report, informed the Committee that women in the Russian Federation were not adequately represented at the decision-making level. The problems of women's participation in economic and political decision-making had been discussed at a National Conference on Women in Development in December 1994. She further stated that the current strategy for increasing the participation of women in decision-making was directed at the restructuring of the existing system of societal governance by the enactment of the necessary laws, the creation of the necessary conditions and the development of special programmes for the training of women.

11. In reply to questions by members of the Committee concerning the resettlement of refugees, including women, the representative recalled the extent, dimensions and causes of migration in the Russian Federation. She stated that the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation had been established in 1991. As of 1 January 1994, 447,900 refugees had been registered, of which women accounted for 53.4 per cent. Refugees received payments equal to the minimum wage and were entitled to interest-free, long-term credit, which had been paid to 6,700 refugee families in 1992 and 1993.

Article 4

12. With regard to special measures to guarantee de facto equality, the representative stated that the law did not allow discrimination on the basis of sex. She also informed them that reform of the legislation of the Russian Federation for purposes of ensuring equality was under way.

Article 5

13. In response to a question on what had been done to ensure that women were fairly portrayed in the media, the representative stated that that issue, among other concerns of women, was systematically addressed by the programmes on State television and radio. The purpose of those programmes was to inform women of their rights and to draw public attention to women's problems. She named a number of popular programmes that addressed women's issues and concerns. She noted, however, that the stereotyping of the role of women and their place in society sometimes took place in the media and in the press.

14. Members of the Committee wanted to know whether the Government made systematic studies of forms of violence directed against women and the consequences of abuse suffered by them. In reply, the representative stated that her Government interpreted violence against women as a violation of their human rights. She provided the Committee with statistics on various forms of violence against women and information on the consequences of such violence for the lives and health of the women subjected to it. In September 1994, the National Preparatory Council for the Fourth World Conference on Women had convened a meeting to discuss the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The National Platform for the Advancement of Women contained a separate section dealing with action for the prevention of violence against women. She also informed the Committee that in 1993, 14,400 rape cases had been registered. In that year, the total number of crimes involving women as victims was 331,800. As a result of those crimes, 14,500 women had died and

56,400 had suffered mutilation or other bodily injury. The representative stated that the legislation of the Russian Federation regarded rape as a criminal offence punishable by long-term imprisonment. She recognized the need for shelters and mentioned the attempt to establish rehabilitation centres for the victims. Attention was given to the identification of the profiles of violators in order to improve the prevention of such crimes. She also said that, in order to combat violence against women, solutions should be found to current economic and social problems, inter-ethnic conflicts and decline in the living standards of the population.

15. Responding to the question concerning the role of the family during the period of transition and the increase of the burden of family responsibilities on women, the representative said that although her Government considered the distribution of family responsibilities as an internal family matter, it nevertheless viewed egalitarian distribution of those responsibilities as desirable and conducted policies directed at the encouragement of equal participation of men and women in parenting and caring for family members. She also stated that the expansion of economic freedom of Russian women would help to liberate them from the everyday burden of domestic work.

Article 6

16. One expert cited an independent non-governmental organization source of information on prostitution in the major cities of the Russian Federation, and requested more information on prostitution and on measures that the Government had taken to address those problems. In response, the representative stated that although it was not appropriate to refer to a source other than the report under discussion, she nevertheless was willing to comment on some aspects of that phenomenon. She referred the Committee to the fourth periodic report, where the legislation dealing with prostitution was described. She stated that the law did not establish criminal liability for prostitution, but corruption of minors, keeping of brothels and procuring for pecuniary gain were considered criminal offences. She also informed members that there was no department in the Russian Federation dealing with prostitution and, therefore, there was no reliable source of information and statistics on that issue. She stated that prostitutes did not undergo any additional medical examination and could be held responsible for their actions only in an administrative way, in other words, they could be fined.

17. The representative stated that the Government did not seek to determine whether marriages between Russian women and foreign citizens were genuine. She also pointed out that because legal illiteracy was quite widespread, it was conceivable that some Russian women could have been taken abroad on fictional contracts. She referred to the fact that the Russian Federation had joined Interpol, which might help to address problems of prostitution and associated criminal acts.

Article 7

18. In response to a question concerning the representation of Russian women in Parliament and the generally undemocratic situation with respect to women's participation in political decision-making, the representative replied that,

after a decrease, there had lately been a notable increase in the activities of women and in their self-confidence. There were now more women leaders in public movements and political parties in the Russian Federation. The political movement "Women of Russia" had been founded in October 1993 and was represented in the Parliament. Its main goal was to promote the socio-political role of Russian women and to advance them to decision-making positions. Although women's representation in the legislative organs of the federal Government had somewhat improved, they were still significantly underrepresented in the upper echelons of federal ministries. In 1995, there were only two women ministers. The strategy for the integration of women in decision-making was directed at the development and implementation of special programmes for the training and promotion of decisive, able and competent women.

19. In her answer to the question concerning measures taken by her Government to ensure that the level of women's representation in public life did not decline, particularly in rural areas, the representative said that legislation in the Russian Federation contained no discriminatory rules limiting the participation of women in the political life of the country. She pointed out that the old system of quotas, although helping to soften the effects of discrimination on women, was an old-fashioned way to address the problem and new methods should be sought. In that respect, she emphasized the greater political participation of women, which was rising. Women's organizations were an integral part of the country's socio-political structure, but many of them were still in the process of being built and were faced with a variety of difficulties. The representative informed members of the Committee that special measures had been formulated to find competent women to stand for election to executive bodies.

Article 10

20. In response to the question on government initiatives to evaluate sexism in the educational system, the representative responded that article 5 of the Education Act of the Russian Federation guaranteed access to education regardless of various factors, including sex. Women in the Russian Federation had equal access with men to higher and technical education with the exception of some occupations where operation of hazardous machinery or performance of physically strenuous tasks were required. Some restrictions on women's participation in those occupations were spelt out in job descriptions. The representative informed the Committee that the proportion of women in higher educational establishments was stable.

Article 11

21. Responding to the question on the high rate of unemployment among Russian women, the representative said that the right to work and the right to non-discriminatory treatment in the labour market were the most difficult and contradictory questions to be addressed under the conditions of the fledgling market economy. She stated that women had accounted for almost 70 per cent of the unemployed in 1993 and explained that it was the result of the restructuring of "women's branches of the economy". She pointed out, however, that the proportion of women among the unemployed was expected to decline to 60 to 65 per cent as the first stage of the reform had now been completed. She also

informed members that the Government had just begun to regulate labour relations under the conditions of a market economy and based its policies on the principles of assistance to the needy and of strengthening conditions for the development of employment opportunities.

22. Regarding discrimination against women in the labour market, the representative informed the Committee that the Government had never stated explicitly or implicitly that women should confine themselves exclusively to matters of family and home-making. At the same time, freedom of expression allowed some journalists and politicians to express their personal views regarding the role of women in the economy and society. She noted that there was unequal treatment of women and men in the private sector, though women who had been discriminated against were free to turn to the courts for the resolution of discrimination cases, even when companies were closing.

23. As regards the disparities in remuneration between men and women, the representative informed the Committee that salaries of women were lower not because of discrimination, but because they were employed in the sectors dependent on the State budget. The average salary of a woman in the Russian Federation was one third lower than that of men. On the other hand, when women held jobs comparable to those of men, they were paid at the same rate.

24. Concerning special treatment given to pregnant women, members asked how the policies of maternity leave and benefits had been implemented under conditions of scarcity. In response, the representative said that such measures had been taken and were discussed in the fourth periodic report.

25. Members of the Committee wished to know the value of family allowances in real terms compared with the period before economic reform. The representative said that the analysis of changes in the real value of family allowances was complicated because of the difference between the purchasing power of the family income and its nominal value. Changes in the structure of allowances constituted the other source of complexity. She informed the Committee that as at the end of 1993, there were several types of allowances available to families with dependent children. The size of the allowance was determined on the basis of the age of dependent children and the number of income-providers in the family. She also informed the Committee that since 1992, families with dependent children were entitled to a tax deduction per dependent child.

Article 12

26. In response to the question on the impact of structural adjustment on the provision of and access to health care by women and children, the representative informed the Committee that access to health care in her country was guaranteed by the Constitution. The health care system was being transformed from a system based on the State budget to one based on private insurance. The State guaranteed access to free health care to women and children.

27. In connection with the question regarding the impact of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) on women in the Russian Federation, the representative said that the Government considered this a priority task and a matter of national security. She informed the

Committee that in January 1994, 264 cases of women with HIV had been registered in the Russian Federation of whom 42 per cent were girls and of whom 33 had been pregnant when diagnosed with the virus. The Government had drafted a law on the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation, which was now being considered by legislative organs of the Government.

28. Responding to the question on family planning and the request for recent data on that issue, the representative stated that the Government was financing a federal programme to establish family-planning offices in all medical establishments. The programme aimed at greater availability of contraceptives and a reduction in the number of abortions. She informed the Committee that in 1994 25 family-planning centres were operating throughout the Russian Federation and, as a result of that, the abortion rate had declined to 94 per 1,000 women from 114 per 1,000 in 1990.

Article 14

29. Concerning the impact of fertilizers and pesticides on the health of women farmers and their children, the representative stated that her Government had taken a number of measures directed at improving the life of rural women. Women in rural areas were in some cases entitled to additional benefits. Women below the age of 35 were not allowed to be assigned to work with poisons, pesticides and disinfectants. There was a specific list of occupations and places where women were not allowed to work. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food had developed a programme directed at the introduction of greater automation and reduction of manual work in the areas that were especially harmful to human health.

30. Experts requested some additional information on rural-urban migration involving women. The representative replied that migration from rural areas was caused by the lack of prestigious employment opportunities in those areas. She stressed that unemployment could not be viewed as the single most important cause of migration because women from rural areas had little chance of finding employment in the cities. She also pointed out that migration from rural to urban areas had always been typical for the Russian Federation and in the past had been the result of the urbanization policy.

31. In connection with the question on the marketing infrastructure available to rural women, the representative replied that such infrastructure was at the initial stage of its development. The Government expected that in the future it would be widely accessible to all people employed within the agro-industrial complex.

Article 16

32. One expert commented that, according to various media reports, there had been an alarming increase in the number of homeless children in the Russian Federation. She wanted to know what the reason for that was and what measures had been taken by the Government to address the problem. The representative responded that every year in the Russian Federation 60,000 unsupervised minors were arrested for vagrancy and criminal activity. She informed the Committee that at present there were 59 social rehabilitation centres, 151 orphanages and

5 centres for assistance to children operating in the country. The activities of those institutions were directed at finding caring homes for children without families.

Additional comments and questions

33. Members of the Committee applauded the in-depth, substantive answers provided by the representative in response to questions posed by the Committee. One member expressed her concern about the system of quotas and the fact that the Government seemed to have completely discarded the potential usefulness of quotas as a tool for the facilitation of the advancement of women. She said that she could not see how the Russian Federation could improve women's participation in decision-making without obliging political parties to incorporate women into politics. She further stated that quotas had been used successfully in many countries. She expressed her hope that the creation of women's organizations and the greater involvement of women in politics could help the incorporation of their interests into the economics and politics of the transition.

34. In response to that comment, the representative said that although quotas might be of some use in the facilitation of women's advancement, Russian women felt demeaned by them. She said that her Government saw more opportunities for the improvement of the situation of women in the Russian Federation through encouraging women's political participation. She said that it was essential to get more women involved in the work of women's organizations and political parties.

35. Another expert expressed her concern that women in the Russian Federation, like in many other countries that underwent structural adjustment, were the main victims of the negative effects of the transition process. She said that during the period of transition, Russian women were exposed to discrimination from both the old and the new systems. She further expressed her concern over the feminization of poverty and its devastating consequences. She commented on the segregation of the labour market and expressed her hope that the new system would be able to overcome that impediment to the advancement of women.

36. Another expert was concerned with the resurgence of stereotyping. She pointed out that the stereotyping of the role of women was not addressed under the old system and there existed a real danger of its perpetuation. She stressed the need for addressing women's individual and not just family-related needs. She also expressed her concern about the current internal war in the Russian Federation and its consequences in terms of loss of life and drain of much-needed financial resources.

37. One expert made a comment about the impact of structural adjustment on social services and the deteriorating health of the Russian population. She was especially concerned about widespread illnesses of the lungs, the digestive system and the nervous system among Russian children. She requested more information on the causes of those illnesses, particularly nervous disorders.

38. In response to that comment, the representative cited ecological reasons, poverty and worsening nutritional standards as possible causes of the widespread deterioration in the health of Russian citizens.

39. A comment was made concerning the scope of new social and economic problems that had to be dealt with by the Government in the context of transition. The problems of poverty, the deterioration of the health system and the decline in the provision of social services were mentioned. In that context, the expert expressed her fear that continuation of the reform would lead to further deterioration in standards of living in the country. She felt, however, that there were some positive developments as well. She thought that economic and political crises brought a greater awareness of women's problems and encouraged women's political participation. She advised the Government of the Russian Federation to use the Committee in its efforts to reform the economy and society.

40. One member commented on the need for more special temporary measures to help Russian women achieve full integration of their interests into economic and social policy-making during the period of transition.

41. Another expert expressed her concern about the growing number of prostitutes in the Russian Federation, who operated not only in the Russian Federation but also in other countries where their human rights were constantly violated. She said that there were many Russian prostitutes in Turkey and some of them were infected with HIV. She requested some information on what happened to Russian prostitutes who were deported from Turkey and other countries. She felt that such information was needed for better monitoring of women's human rights.